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Department of State
Operations Center

(GUYANA WORKING GROUP)

Situation Report No. 15

Situation in Guyana as of 2400 hours (EST), November 22, 1978

Embassy Georgetown anticipates that the GOG will lift its objections tomorrow to travel of approximately 74 of the known survivors. Larry Layton has been arraigned and three others are being held by the police. We do not know how many of the 74 survivors will choose to leave the country at this time. The USAF should be able to provide transportation within the next few days.

Recovery operations in the Jonestown area encountered aggravating problems, including heavy rainfalls, during daylight hours today. Nevertheless, 40 bodies (not 80 as earlier reported) have been moved to Georgetown where they will be loaded on a C-141 scheduled to arrive at Dover AFB on November 23 at 0700 (EST). The GOG has continued to cooperate fully with U.S. military operations and, at one point loaned the two remaining Guyanese Airways helicopters for transportation to the Jonestown area. The Ambassador spoke twice with Prime Minister Burnham and twice with Minister Green today concerning details of the recovery operation.

Tomorrow (November 23), barring heavy rainfall, the Embassy estimates that all remains will be moved to Georgetown in body bags. Identification of remains is becoming increasingly difficult; visual means are no longer feasible. Identification of over half of the bodies will have to be attempted in the U.S.

In the last 24 hours, no new Jonestown survivor have been discovered. The GOG forces continue to search the Jonestown area for survivors. More U.S. military aircraft will be in the area tomorrow and will be available for search and rescue operations.

The Embassy has taken possession of the passports found at Jonestown and will forward a list to the Department as quickly as possible. In addition, The embassy has cabled the names of 915 People's Temple members provided by the Guyanese immigration authorities.

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This information will assist SCA in locating next of kin and, possibly, in determining the number of persons residing at the People's Temple compound. Survivors have provided a map locating a small cemetary in the Jonestown area where several People's Temple members may have been buried prior to November 18. U.S. personnel will attempt to locate the cemetary.

Embassy Georgetown has requested permission to retain a local attorney to assist as necessary in handling the personal effects of the Jonestown dead. ARA and L will discuss this matter tomorrow and will inform Georgetown of their decision.

We have asked the Embassy to obtain additional identifying information on the helicopter spare parts requested by the Guyanese. Embassy Caracas reports that the Venezuelan air force may be willing to provide one Twin Otter to the Guyanese and will follow up on this lead.

Embassy Port of Spain reports that none of the four Temple members who had arrived there returned to the Embassy on November 22. The Embassy passed our request for an FBI visit to a Foreign Office official, who will inform the Foreign Minister of it tomorrow. The Embassy speculates that the Foreign Minister may take the request to the cabinet which does not meet until Friday. The Guyanese Government has not yet responded to our latest request for an FBI visit.

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